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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7365th meeting
Wednesday, 21 January 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Today I will briefly update the Council on developments related to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, as well as on my own recent visit to the country, from 15 to 17 December 2014, in continuation of the Secretary-General's good offices.

I would like to begin by clearly stating our alarm. Following weeks of relative calm, the Council meets today amid the worst hostilities in eastern Ukraine since the ceasefire and the Minsk protocol were agreed to on 5 September. Encouraging signs of progress, such as the exchange of hundreds of prisoners, are quickly being overshadowed by renewed fighting and a deepening political stalemate. Ukraine, as well as its neighbours and the broader region, cannot afford the current violent status quo. The escalation of fighting threatens to unravel the Minsk protocol.

While the heavy fighting of the past few days was initially concentrated around Donetsk airport, the numbers of dead and injured, including innocent civilians, are quickly rising elsewhere, as violence spreads throughout the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, including in heavily populated civilian areas such as the city of Donetsk. The conflict is also reportedly inching dangerously close to cities such as Mariupol and Debaltsevo, and endangering areas that until recently have been relatively quiet. In another sign of escalation, reinforcements of fighters are reported on both sides, with the deployment of more sophisticated and heavier weaponry. In Davos today, President Poroshenko stated that there were more than 9,000 regular Russian troops in Ukraine, an accusation that Moscow denies.

On 13 January, as a direct result of the renewal of the fighting, 12 civilians lost their lives and 17 were seriously wounded when their bus was hit in Volnovakha. The United Nations has no means of verifying the facts independently, but after visiting the site three times and conducting crater analysis, the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded that "the rockets that caused craters 1 and 2 had been fired from a north-north-eastern direction" and that

> "the rockets may have been fired approximately 20 kilometres from the point of impact. The SMM is not able to independently verify the point of origin of the rockets or to identify the entity that fired them."

As the Secretary-General stated, this incident, which must be thoroughly investigated and for which those responsible must be brought to justice, is a stark reminder of the urgent need to halt the violence.

Let me also say a few words on the humanitarian situation, which has deteriorated further as conflict has again intensified. A country that until a year ago had no displaced people now has at least 850,000 citizens displaced within its borders and over 600,000 in neighbouring States, according to Ukrainian sources.

Humanitarian actors must have access to do their life-saving work. All parties to the conflict have an obligation to guarantee free and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need, irrespective of where they are located, and they also have to fully respect international humanitarian law. A recent directive with respect to crossing the contact line from Government-held to rebel-held areas could make it exceedingly difficult for humanitarian actors to move aid into areas beyond Government control. It is critical that resources be made available to meet life-saving needs on the ground. The 2015 Strategic Response Plan requests $189 million, and few commitments have been made as yet.

Regrettably, the upsurge in fighting has been accompanied by mutual recriminations between Kyiv

and Russia, and a continued impasse on the diplomatic and political front. As the Secretary-General has repeatedly insisted, there is no substitute for direct and constructive dialogue to move peace forward. The enforcement of a sustainable ceasefire, which presently exists in name only, is both urgent and of primary concern. The line of contact should be observed, and the other elements of the broader Minsk peace plan require expeditious implementation as well. We hope that today's Normandy format meeting in Berlin at the Foreign Minister level will achieve the progress required to return to the implementation of Minsk and to bring together the Normandy Heads of State. Diplomacy has to succeed.

The Minsk agreements offer a solid basis for a resolution of the conflict in the Donbas. There cannot be any unilateral attempt to change their provisions, nor should any party selectively interpret the accords' stipulations. It is our understanding that the apparent differences in interpretation of the Minsk accords are small, but the implications of addressing them in any other way but through dialogue are immense.

In continuation of the Secretary-General's good offices, I returned to Kyiv from 15 to 17 December 2014 to exchange views with President Poroshenko, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, Foreign Minister Klimkin and Speaker of Parliament Groisman, as well as international and bilateral partners. With the new Ukrainian Government formed under Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, all interlocutors expressed their conviction that there was no more scope for delay and that deep and overdue economic, legislative, judicial and political reforms had to be tackled immediately.

I assured my interlocutors that the United Nations would never waver in its solidarity with the country. We remain ready to support all efforts to end the fighting so that a durable and lasting peace may prevail, and we will continue to assist the Ukrainian authorities and citizens of Ukraine to usher in the changes that will be vital for a democratic, secure, independent and prosperous future.

In contrast to the present situation, Donbas was relatively calm during my visit. Nonetheless, all of my interlocutors shared the assessment that even if there is progress on the Minsk process, there is no quick resolution of the numerous challenges facing Ukraine, given the deep economic and geopolitical rifts that have been caused by and remain intrinsically linked to the conflict.

All of us — especially the parties to the conflict — have a responsibility to concertedly, and on a most urgent basis, assist in moving from a narrative of confrontation to a narrative of cooperation, and from a logic of war to a logic of peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing, and I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting in view of the recent deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine and continuous violations of the Minsk agreements. Both Russia and the Russian-sponsored illegal militants persist in interpreting the ceasefire in their own twisted way: Ukraine must cease while the militants can continue to fire.

I believe that no one in this Chamber has any doubt that a country under attack would do its utmost to protect itself. In the face of aggression, it is the inherent right of each and every State to defend its land and its people. That is exactly what Ukraine is doing — defending itself in the face of the ongoing attacks against its unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Time and again in recent months, its leadership has sought to salvage the ceasefire with new proposals, new deadlines and new periods of silence. The militants, however, have benefited from Ukraine's restraint by regrouping, rearming and grabbing more land. Since the start of the ceasefire, the militants have captured an extra 550 square kilometres of Ukrainian territory between Donetsk and Mariupol and, according to their commanders, have no intention of stopping.

In spite of the many calls of the international community to close its borders to the illegal flows of arms and foreign fighters, Russia's borders remain wide open to the flow of deadly weaponry and soldiers of fortune. Here is a typical excerpt from the 16 January report of the smm of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):

> "The SMM saw three unmarked trucks towing three D-30 122-mm howitzers on the southern edge of Donetsk city, travelling west past a 'DPR'-controlled checkpoint. Two unmarked T-80 battle tanks were seen by the SMM travelling south-east in Makiivka ... The SMM observed a

> convoy of 21 military-style Ural and KAMAZ trucks, also unmarked, heading south on a highway near Starobesheve ... Four of the trucks carried what appeared to be communication equipment, while the remaining trucks were covered."

Here is another report. In the weekly update for the period of 15-21 January, the OSCE observer mission at Gukovo and Donetsk noted:

> "The OM continued to observe a number of persons in military-style clothing crossing the border in both directions... During the reporting period, the Obersvation Teams observed 396 men and women in military-style dress crossing the border in both directions... Ninety-three percent of border crossings occurred at the Donetsk BCP."

The little that can be gleaned from the two kilometres where the OSCE observer mission is active is clearly indicative of what is happening away from the eyes of the observers. It is no wonder that Russia keeps blocking all attempts to expand the OSCE border observer mission to cover more ground. The Ukrainian sources estimate that as of 15 January, the separatists had 542 tanks, 990 armoured personnel carriers, nearly 700 artillery systems, some 70 Grad rockets and 57 air defence systems.

How on Earth, but for Russia's continued supply, could a ragtag bunch of illegal militants obtain such an impressive arsenal of sophisticated heavy weaponry and arms, which by now could well rival the arsenals of the smaller European States? And where on Earth, but for Russia's continued support, could a ragtag bunch of militants get the millions needed to buy all that heavy weaponry and machinery, especially in an area where the local inhabitants are said to be starving and local hospitals cannot even buy bread for their patients? So much for Russia's claims that it is not a party to this conflict. The war in eastern Ukraine is not a civil war, as some try to portray it, but a calculated and systematic attempt to destabilize Ukraine — a foreign-sponsored war.

Backed by sophisticated weaponry including Grad rockets, artillery systems, modern tanks, armoured personnel carriers, and an influx of foreign mercenaries, the militants continue their barrage of deadly attacks. The past few weeks in particular have seen a disturbing increase in ceasefire violations, including a massive onslaught by the militants on the Donetsk airport. Yesterday again, intensive fighting was reported in several locations, including north-west of Luhansk, where militants destroyed, with massive artillery fire, and occupied one of the checkpoints of the Ukrainian military.

Growing evidence points to a systematic use by the militants of residential areas as a cover for launching Grad rockets and shelling the Ukrainian forces. Overall, since the announcement of the ceasefire on 5 September 2014, Ukrainian forces and civilians have been shelled more than 5,660 times, some 1,500 Ukrainian military have been killed and wounded, and at least 151 civilians have been killed. We look forward to the results of a thorough investigation of the Volnovakha bus attack. We must ensure that perpetrators of this reprehensible act, and all the countless acts of violence and gross violations of human rights, especially around the areas held by the illegal separatist groups, are brought to account.

While every defensive move by Ukraine is blasted by the Russian propaganda as ceasefire violations, Russia has never even once condemned or disowned the illegal and lawless separatist militants. On the contrary. Russia's intentions to rewrite the Minsk agreements in a way that would legitimize and accept the territorial gains achieved by the militants speaks to the Kremlin's wholehearted support for those criminals. Lithuania rejects all calls to renegotiate the terms of the ceasefire. The agreed parameters of the ceasefire already exist and must be respected. We urge all sides, in particular Russia, to engage and fully implement the Minsk agreements in their entirety and without any further delay.

If Russia is genuinely interested in putting an end to the devastating violence and deaths in eastern Ukraine, including the deaths of its own nameless soldiers sent to wage a war against a brotherly nation, it must stop destabilizing Ukraine, stop military supplies to its proxies, stop the illegal separatist groups and withdraw all military equipment. The Ukrainian- Russian State border must be secured. Continuous monitoring by the OSCE must be ensured. All hostages and illegally detained persons must be released, including the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was kidnapped and is being held illegally in Russia.

International observers, including the United Nations and OSCE monitoring missions, must be allowed full and unconditional access throughout Ukraine's territory, including Crimea. International monitors' full, unobstructed access to Crimea remains

particularly important in the light of the continuous deterioration of the situation of the indigenous Tatar community since the annexation by Russia of the region.

My delegation firmly supports Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and will not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea. We urge the Minsk signatories to spare no effort in seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis. We urge Russia in particular to embrace the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and put an end to its destabilizing, expansionist and revanchist policies in the region, including Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasus, where, contrary, to Russia's commitments under the 2008 August and September agreements, it is pursuing the annexation of Georgia's Abkhaz and Tskhinvali regions under the guise of the so-called treaties on alliance and strategic partnerships.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. We are grateful for Under-Secretary-General Feltman's unflagging attention to this alarming situation and for the alarm he sounded in the Security Council today in very explicit terms.

As this is the Council's first meeting on Ukraine in 2015, it is our twenty-eighth meeting on the crisis in the past 11 months, far more than on any other situation during the same period. We keep meeting on Ukraine because, despite countless commitments made to the international community to de-escalate — here in the Council and in Geneva, Minsk, Berlin, Normandy and elsewhere — Russia continues to choose a path of escalation and obfuscation. In addition to occupying Crimea, Russia continues to train, equip and fight alongside separatists in eastern Ukraine. Indeed, Russia has so consistently broken its commitments and violated its obligations not to lop off part of another country that some in the Council may begin to accept Russia's behaviour as an unfortunate but inevitable reality, a new normal that would be dangerous for Ukraine and dangerous for international peace and security, because complacency would reward aggression and threaten the basic rules on which our collective security rests.

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because Russia continues to train and equip separatists with heavy weapons and to fight by their side, in flagrant violation of the September Minsk agreement, Ukrainian sovereignty and international law. Even as we sit here today, the separatists trained, supplied and supported by Russia are launching a full-scale attack on the strategic city of Debaltseve, inside Ukrainian-controlled territory, in blatant violation of the 19 September Minsk ceasefire lines, in an attemp to gain control of a significant rail juncture. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported yesterday that at least 30 Grad rockets had hit the city on 19 January, killing 3 civilians and wounding 12. The OSCE confirmed that those rockets had come from the direction of the separatist-controlled city of Horlivka. Yesterday, independent media reported that separatists had blown up a rail bridge connecting the port city of Mariupol to the rest of Ukraine. Thankfully, there were no casualties, but now the city must rely on northern access via Donetsk, effectively isolating it and leaving it vulnerable to separatist attacks.

These moves appear calculated and strategic in nature. Since President Poroshenko announced the unilateral silence regime on 9 December, which brought about a brief respite from the violence, separatists and the Russians who backed them have carried out more than 1,000 attacks against Ukrainian positions. Since late December Russia has transferred at least 100 additional pieces of Russian military equipment and materiel to separatists. These latest transfers come atop previous transfers of hundreds of pieces of Russian military equipment to separatists since September, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers, heavy artillery pieces and other military vehicles.

The OSCE is allowed to operate at only two checkpoints on the vast Ukrainian-Russian border. Yet from those two checkpoints alone, monitors note hundreds of individuals in military-style dress freely crossing the border every week. The separatists have a larger fighting force, with more weaponry than some European countries. Meanwhile, Russia is reportedly preparing to deliver its twelfth resupply convoy to separatists in Ukrainian territory at the end of the month. If the past 11 deliveries are any indication, Russia will deny international monitors or Ukrainian authorities the ability to fully inspect the convoys. If Russia is indeed sending humanitarian aid, what does it have to hide?

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because separatists continue to harass, threaten and intimidate the impartial monitors deployed by the OSCE, — monitors who serve on behalf of the international community. According to a 14 January OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine

report, the SMM was stopped at a separatist checkpoint in Oktyabr by a hostile separatist commander who ordered the team's car searched and said the monitors would be shot if a camera was found, even though cameras are a basic tool of documentation work. Separatist guards kept their guns pointed at the monitors during the exchange, the monitors said, even though the team posed no threat and, mercifully, had no camera.

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because Russia continues to break commitments it has made to the escalades. Ukraine and the international community have launched several serious efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict, including through the trilateral contact Group on Ukraine, the Minsk agreement, the Normandy group and other negotiating forums. We continue to believe that there can be no military solution and that political negotiations are key. Yet, time and again, Russia's words promise peace while Russia's actions make war. Time and again, President Putin has extended an olive branch in one hand while passing out Grad missiles and tanks with the other.

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because Russia's actions are directly contributing to a humanitarian crisis. With each passing day, more civilians are killed and maimed. Many of us have seen the ghastly images of the 13 January attack on a passenger bus, which was struck while waiting at a Ukrainian security checkpoint at Volnovakha. Indelible images of the blood-soaked snow alongside the bus, of its blown-out windows and the gapping holes left in its seats and curtains, of the gory steps to the back entrance of the bus — these images are unforgettable. Thirteen civilians were killed in that attack and at least 16 more people were wounded.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission said in a 17 January report that it had

> "conducted a comprehensive inspection, focusing on five craters caused by explosions that had occurred during the incident. The investigation included comprehensive crater analysis of two specific blast craters, including the crater located 10 metres from the side of the passenger bus. In the SMM's assessment, all craters examined were caused by rockets fired from a north-north-eastern direction."

The conclusion of the impartial OSCE monitoring mission is that the craters at the crime scene were caused by rockets fired from the north-north-east direction from the checkpoint. That area is controlled by Russian-backed separatists, and multiple open-source reports have shown separatists firing Grad rockets from the territory to the north-north-east of Volnovakha. The same day the bus was struck, the SMM reported hearing Grad rockets fired from several other separatist-controlled areas. At first, separatists bragged on social media about the strike on the Ukrainian security checkpoint. Vut the postings disappeared after it was reported that a busload of civilians had been hit.

For every attack on civilians that makes headlines, there are dozens more, no less deadly, that go unreported. Since the conflict began, more than 10,000 people have been injured in the conflict. Nearly 5,000 people have been killed, approximately 800 of them since November when the Council last met to discuss the Ukraine crisis (see S/PV.7311). One of the attacks that did not make news occurred on 11 January. According to the SMM, mortars struck two houses in the Government-held town of Hranitne, wounding a girl. She died of her injuries before she reached the hospital — she was three years old.

Those are some of the reasons why the Russians' most recent efforts to blame Ukraine ring so hollow. On Thursday, President Putin issued a last-minute invitation to President Poroshenko to discuss a new Russian-conceived so-called peace plan — a plan that would free Russia from the commitment it made in Minsk to withdraw its fighters and return control over the international border to Ukraine. The plan would seek to legitimize territorial gains made by separatists since September, as well as Russian personnel and military equipment on the territory of Ukraine. We have seen peace plans like that before in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria. When President Poroshenko did not accept Putin's offer, Russia immediately launched a diplomatic and media blitz, claiming it was proof that Ukraine was not interested in peace. Let us pull the veil away from Putin's peace plan and call it for what it is: a Russian occupation plan.

We need to implement the peace plans we already have — peace plans Russia has signed and broken. If Russia is serious about peace, it should follow through on Minsk, to which it had agreed more than four months ago. If Russia wants to end the conflict, the steps they must take are the same as they were on 5 September 2014: remove all military equipment and personnel from Ukraine; stop backing the separatists; allow unimpeded OSCE monitoring; return control

of Ukraine's international border to the Ukrainian Government and release all hostages, including those being held in Russia, such as Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko. We understand Ms. Savchenko has been on hunger strike for nearly a month to protest her detention and is suffering serious health problems. Yet Russia has taken none of the steps set out in Minsk.

In contrast to Russia, Ukraine has consistently taken steps to de-escalate the crisis, demonstrating measurable progress on several key commitments made in Minsk and passing key reforms to reduce corruption and grant greater authority to its regions. In September and December, President Mr. Poroshenko announced unilateral ceasefires on the part of Ukrainian forces, resulting in brief but significant decreases in violence. Yet peace cannot be made unilaterally. Where Ukraine has been forced to respond to cynical attempts by the separatists and Russian forces to use the ceasefires to gain additional territory, the Ukrainian forces have tried to hold the agreed line.

Of course, the Ukrainian Government must abide by international norms, even as it defends its land and its people. We are concerned by the European Council's report on abuse in Ukrainian prisons, and we urge the Government to conduct thorough, impartial investigations into its findings, as well as to develop a plan to address them. We take seriously reports of the alleged use of cluster munitions in populated areas. All sides should take every feasible precaution to prevent any loss of civilian life, including by indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas.

There is a broader reason it would be dangerous to accept Russia's actions as the new normal. We have seen this playbook before. Before eastern Ukraine we saw it in Crimea, and before Crimea we saw it in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and before that in Georgia and Transnistria. The end-game in all of those Moscow-manufactured crises has been identical: to gobble up parts of neighbouring countries and to create frozen conflicts. And Russia is consistently working to put those frozen conflicts under a deeper freeze. In recent weeks, for example, at the same time that Russia was flouting its Minsk agreements, President Putin was putting the finishing touches on another set of agreements, the so-called "treaties of alliance", with de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Those treaties will compound years of violations of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

What is frozen in these conflicts? Instability is frozen. Violations of sovereignty are frozen. Militarization is frozen. In sum, all of the problems that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, were created to address, are frozen. If Russia succeeds in achieving its aims, if we allow this behaviour to become the new normal, this will not be the last time Russia uses this well-worn playbook.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council holds a large number of meetings on a number of worthwhile topics in this Chamber. We use many beautiful words about the need to peacefully settle political crises, about the impossibility of a military solution, about the rule of law, democracy and the inclusiveness of political processes and about human rights and the primacy of the protection of civilians in conflict. However, after discussing Ukraine here about 30 times, the question arises as to how well-aligned the declarations are with the situation in the country. Are they directly applicable, or are they provided just for the sake of eloquence, to be discarded when political suitability takes precedence? Are all of the resolutions and presidential statements adopted here relevant for such a country as Ukraine?

The Russian Federation is ensuring full compliance with the Minsk accords to settle the Ukrainian crisis. We take that into account during contacts with the sides, including the leadership of Ukraine and the rebels and representatives of interested foreign countries, including under the Normandy format. Unfortunately, Kyiv botched the 16 January meeting of the Minsk contact group: the Ukrainian representatives did not show up at the Belarusian capital.

The situation on the ground has recently worsened significantly, with the Donetsk airport becoming the epicentre of clashes. Despite the fact that, in line with the Minsk agreements, the airport was to have been given to the militias, the matter has not been resolved peacefully because of disputes in other areas of the engagement line. Ukrainian armed forces have continued to shell Donetsk and other populated areas, leading to a large number of civilian casualties.

On 15 January, the President of Russia sent a letter to the President of Ukraine regarding the need to rigorously implement the silence regime, as well as about the need for a swift withdrawal of weaponry from the engagement line, in accordance with the Minsk agreements, based on coordinates that were insisted

upon by the Ukrainian side — I stress that — as well as a timetable with a list of actions for the sides regarding the the withdrawal of each type of conventional and reactive artillery, also in line with time frames put forth by Ukraine.

The Russian side expressed its readiness to bring its influence to bear on the militias to ensure that the option was adopted in good faith and to avoid civilian casualties, and suggested providing assistance to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) regarding monitoring of the implementation of those steps. I underscore that the letter was sent in accordance with a request discussed during telephone contacts between Russian and Ukrainian leaders. However, instead of appropriately responding to the proposal, the Ukrainian side resumed artillery shelling of Donetsk.

The current escalation of the situation in Donbas is hardly fortuitous. Over the entire time of the ceasefire, the Ukrainian side violated the Minsk agreements by stepping up its military presence in the south-east of the country, there was a strengthening of militarization and regrouping, as well as new waves of mobilization appeals from Kyiv to avenge the defeats of 2014.

At the same time, a number of countries actively supporting the "war party" in Kyiv irresponsibly provided Ukraine with military-purpose items. It is clear that the events of recent days are yet another attempt by Kyiv to resolve the internal political conflict militarily, which will definitely lead to exacerbating the crisis of the State of Ukraine and numerous civilian casualties. Ultimately, it is fraught with catastrophe.

Many times here in the Chamber, we have pointed to the fact that those who come to power as a result of a coup d'état — the so-called Government of the victors — and while enjoying support from armed radicals are conducting a policy that has nothing in common with establishing a country of national unity. Kyiv has cast aside all instruments concerning a political settlement of the internal crisis. The 21 February agreement signed by Yanukovych and the opposition on the establishment of a Government of national unity had become a dead letter by the next day. The Geneva statement of 17 April, providing for swift and comprehensive constitutional reform involving all regions and political forces, was ignored. The road map of the Chairman of the OSCE was rejected. Has anyone here heard anything about the inclusive national dialogue referred to in the Minsk protocol?

The first thing that the forces that came to power after the coup in Kyiv did was to forge ahead with decisions aimed at restricting the rights of linguistic minorities and suffocating dissidents. Despite the fact that half of the country speaks in Russian, almost all Russian-language media were closed down, Russian television broadcasts were forbidden and the political forces representing the Russian citizens in south-east Ukraine were intimidated or simply banned. The south-east and south saw horrific crimes be committed, which have not yet been brought to light or seriously investigated. On 2 May in Odessa, dozens of people were burned alive in the House of Trade Unions building. On 9 May, Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War, in Mariupol, civilians were shot. And at the beginning of in July there were again airstrikes in Luhansk.

The nature and dynamics of the crisis in Ukraine are difficult to understand without an understanding of the ideological undercurrents. Last year, 14 October was declared a public holiday in Ukraine — the day of the establishment of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army — which fought on the side of the Nazis. That is an all-out glorification of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators and misanthropes Bandera and Shukhevych, who have the blood of tens of thousands of Soviet and Polish citizens on their hands. Bandera gave indiscriminate orders to execute his opponents on a massive scale, in particular on grounds of nationality. Let me recall Bandera's words: "I will kill every Pole from 16 to 60 years of age". Shukhevych so instructed his followers:

> "Do not bully; destroy! Fear not that people will curse us for cruelty. If only half of the Ukrainian population of 40 million remains, there is nothing wrong with that!"

Now incendiary marches, in the style of the Waffen-SS, with portraits of the so-called "heroes of Ukraine" are held completely openly, with the approval of the Kyiv authorities.

Honestly, the Ukrainian people deserve better heroes. The people of eastern Ukraine view this as Americans would feel if in the United States the founding day of the Ku Klux Klan were proclaimed a national holiday and its members marched in Washington, D.C., with burning crosses and formed detachments to be sent to other areas of the country to put things in order.

However, speaking on German television, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk lamented the fact that during the Second World War "the Soviet Union invaded Ukraine

and Germany". Apparently, he would like Ukraine to remain under Nazi occupation even today. Still, enlightened Europe kept silent on the matter. Indeed, it is very strange that those who claim to be civilized can tolerate such a subversive ideology. This is the ideology guiding Kyiv's so-called "anti-terrorist" operations, which are, in reality, punitive operations. Aircraft, heavy weaponry, artillery, banned cluster and phosphorus munitions, tactical missiles and multiple rocket launchers are being used against cities in the south-east. The confirmed death toll is approaching 5,000. Refugees and internally displaced persons number in the millions. In the city of Donetsk alone, more than 1,000 houses have been destroyed. Many small towns and other inhabited areas have been totally destroyed. There have been strikes against residential areas and infrastructure, with total disregard for international humanitarian law and basic moral decency. Even major western non-governmental organizations, which hardly sympathize with the militia, say that the Ukrainian security forces do not distinguish between military and civilian targets.

Kyiv reacted immediately to a terrible incident that occurred on 13 January involving a passenger bus in Volnovakha, leveling charges at the militias without any investigation or trial. However, according to the conclusion of the OSCE Mission, the firing came from the north-north-east direction, which is an area where it is dubious rebels could be. The Ukrainian Government is using this tragedy to the full extent so as to incite militaristic hysteria.

The very next day, the Ukrainian brass stepped up artillery and bomb strikes against the cities of Donbas, resulting in the deaths of dozens of civilians, including women, children and the elderly. A bus stop was hit yesterday, resulting in two deaths and 11 serious injuries. Those are just the latest such incidents.

A Russian television station on the ground said that today in Donetsk eight civilians had been killed and 30 wounded, including children. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian newspaper reported that today five civilians had been killed and 29 wounded. The websites of Ukrainian militias say basically the same thing. In the city of Stakhanaov, Luhansk district, up to 10 citizens were killed today as a result of salvoes from multiple rocket launchers. However, no one in Kyiv is conducting funeral marches. It would seem that the fallen are going unnoticed.

A significant military force in the south-east is made up of the so-called "volunteer battalions", which are funded by Ukrainian oligarchs and answer to no one. Some of them openly use Nazi symbols. The Kyiv authorities, while constantly referring to the unity and territorial integrity of the country, have not taken a single step towards genuine national dialogue or constitutional reform with the participation of all groups and regions. Moreover, Kyiv is doing everything to cut off the south-east in practical terms. A decision has been made to withdraw all State institutions and terminate payments from the budget, including welfare and pensions. The movement of persons and goods is limited along the lines of engagement. Since 12 January, transportation between Ukraine and Luhansk has been at a standstill.

The humanitarian situation is catastrophic. Just last summer, we raised this issue and proposed that the Council adopt a draft resolution in this regard. Some members of the Security Council, unfortunately, did not heed our call. They hushed up the topic, waxed poetic and squabbled about the number of victims required to qualify the situation as a "humanitarian crisis". Today there is no room for demagoguery. United Nations humanitarian actors view the situation as a full-scale crisis calling for a presence on the ground, clusters for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and financing humanitarian appeals.

They have recently reported a deterioration in the situation regarding the delivery of aid due to further obstruction from the Kyiv authorities. Russia is providing significant humanitarian assistance to Donbas, in spite of the controversy that some members of the Council have attempted to raise in this regard. At the same time, we continue to seek agreement with Kyiv, in spite of its obstruction, on the conditions for the provision of such supplies. We give timely information regarding sending humanitarian convoys and cargo. Aid is also going through various channels. Russia has just decided to contribute $5 million to the World Food Programme's humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine.

The Minsk agreement, signed in September by Kyiv and representatives of Luhansk and Donetsk with the mediation of the OSCE and Russia, laid the groundwork for a peaceful settlement. There is a need for the swift resumption of practical work with the contact group for their full implementation. For our part, we are doing out utmost to ensure that the next

meeting in Minsk will take place as soon as possible. We urge all responsible members of the international community to put pressure on the Ukrainian authorities to move away from confrontation and bring to an end its policy on the forced suppression of the south-east. They must understand that the most pressing need now is to launch direct Ukraine-wide dialogue to discuss the constitutional makeup of the country, which should be comfortable and safe for all citizens without exception.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chilean presidency for its initiative to hold this debate. I would also like to thank Mr. Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing.

Chad is concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine, in particular in the areas around Donetsk and Luhansk, in the east of the country, where, following a period of relative calm, tensions have been on the rise since the beginning of 2015. Exchanges of fire and violent confrontations broke out around the airport of Donetsk on 29 December 2014, resulting in a number of victims, including Ukraine soldiers and separatists. That constitutes a serious violation of the ceasefire under the Minsk agreements of 5 and 19 September 2014.

We deplore this return to violence, including the firing of rockets on 13 January at a bus near Volnovakha in eastern Ukraine, resulting in the death of at least 12 civilians, most of them women. To that, we must add the violent clashes of the past 48 hours, which have caused several deaths among Ukrainian troops and civilians. Chad firmly condemns the return to violence. We call upon the parties to respect international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Chad takes note of the adoption by the Ukrainian Parliament, on 20 January, of a law for the partial mobilization of approximately 50,000 reservists to the army in 2015. However, we remain convinced that the solution to the Ukrainian crisis will be political and that it largely depends on the willingness of Ukrainians themselves to undertake a genuine negotiating process to arrive at a lasting peace. In that respect, Chad calls upon the parties to show calm and restraint and urges the Government to establish a direct and inclusive national dialogue in order to bring about national reconciliation.

Ukraine's civil war sadly took a very high toll in 2014 in terms of lives lost. More than 4,800 were killed, to which we must add the 298 victims of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, which was shot down over eastern Ukraine in July. There have been 10,300 injured, including 300 children, and more than 1 million displaced.

In the light of this human tragedy, Chad encourages the international community to increase and diversify its mediation efforts aimed at relaunching the peace process in Ukraine. We would also call upon countries that wield influence with the parties to exert the necessary pressure in the pursuit of peace in Ukraine with full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Ukraine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Often in the corridors of this Organization, there is talk of being weary of the issue of Ukraine because of the many meetings that have been held on the subject, both in the Security Council and the General Assembly. I would like to state very clearly here that Spain will never tire of defending the unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. That is why we feel that it is important that the Security Council continue to very closely follow developments in the situation.

We heard with great concern the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Feltman, who qualified the situation on the ground as alarming. That alarm is justified, as just yesterday the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) met and made the same observation about the situation on the ground.

Spain of course supports the OSCE activities and the efforts of the trilateral contact group aimed at bringing about an effective ceasefire and implementing the pending elements of the Minsk agreements. The Minsk protocol and memorandum continue to be the fundamental reference points; they should not be reinterpreted. All efforts aimed at a return to the path laid out by the Minsk agreements would be welcome. We therefore hope that the efforts undertaken in recent days in the Normandy format and within the trilateral contact group will continue to make progress.

As I said, we are extremely concerned by the escalation of the situation on the ground. We believe

that it is essetnail that all signatories to the Minsk agreements reaffirm the ceasefire's validity.

With regard to the civilian population, I would say that preventing their suffering is an indispensable and urgent task. We need to guarantee an effective distribution of humanitarian aid. The European Union has shown and will continue to demonstrate itself to be an asset in that regard. We have thus far provided €76 million in aid and are working to increase that amount. Of that, 40 per cent has been allocated to the inhabitants of the conflict areas controlled by the rebels. I would also like to say that there is a clear risk of humanitarian assistance being used for the wrong reasons, and we need to work together to establish a mechanism, perhaps within the trilateral contact group, which would seek to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to its rightful recipients.

Finally, we would stress that any lasting and sustainable solution must include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. That is the crux of General Assembly resolution 68/262 and the essential message that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Mr. García Margallo, will convey to the Kyiv authorities when he travels to the region on 8 and 9 February. That will be one of his first trips since the start of Spain's non-permanent membership in the Security Council.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I would start by thanking Mr. Feltman for his briefing. We have heeded his warning regarding the deterioration of the security situation in Donbas over the past few days. Fighting has resumed with an intensity that we had not seen in Ukraine for several months, especially around what remains of the Donetsk airport.

What is urgently needed now is to achieve a de-escalation in order to put the political dialogue back on track. The parties must understand that there can be no military solution to the conflict, which has already claimed over 5,000 lives and which entails significant costs for Ukraine, Russia and the European Union.

Only the full implementation, in good faith, of the Minsk agreements by all parties will provide a way out of the crisis. Every effort must be made to achieve that goal.

France remains fully mobilized with a view to achieving a peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict, and in that context supports all international initiatives that share that goal. Minister Laurent Fabius is in close contact with his German, Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. Today in Berlin, there have been further exchanges between the Ministers under the Normandy format.

Our objectives, as recently recalled by the French President, are clear and consistent: respect for the ceasefire; the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line; the settlement of humanitarian issues; and, eventually, the election of new representatives in eastern Ukraine.

Yesterday, the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in which Russia and Ukraine are represented, adopted a political statement calling for a de-escalation and the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. That is also a step in the right direction. But beyond mere words, and above all, we now need concrete and verifiable action.

The Security Council, which last year dealt with the Ukrainian crisis on more than 30 occasions, should support those efforts and participate in the search for a lasting solution. The risk of the crisis spreading within Ukraine and beyond should not be underestimated. Ukraine must therefore remain at the heart of the Security Council's priorities.

However, for that same reason, we also want to open a new chapter in 2015 to find a way out of the spiral of confrontation, and we want to do so without abandoning our principles. Nothing can undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its international borders.

The situation is now, paradoxically, clearer than it was a few months ago. The parameters necessary for an end to the crisis are now known to all — namely, the Minsk agreements. Against all odds, and despite alternating periods of violence — as we see now — and quiet, that road map was upheld until last week. It is not challenged by the parties.

Its implementation remains very difficult. The discussions in the contact group are too slow and only lead to modest results. That is due to the significant distrust that prevails between the Russian and Ukrainian parties. That state of affairs must be overcome, and we must encourage each party to have the courage to get involved.

Upstream, there is now a mechanism for validation and political impetus: the Normandy format. It seeks

to encourage parties to go further and takes note of the progress made.

However, much remains to be done, as the situation on the ground today makes tragically clear. We must move forward if we want diplomatic dynamics to prevail over violence and chaos. It seems clear to us that Russia is reluctant to engage openly and lastingly to normalize the situation. The recent violence is further evidence of Russia's capacity to fuel tensions even as a diplomatic process begins.

We also call on Ukraine to launch a process leading to institutional reforms giving Donbas greater autonomy while respecting the sovereignty of Ukraine. We call once again on Russia to stop the transfer of arms and individuals across the Russian-Ukrainian border. We call on Russia to bring all of its influence to bear on the separatists to ensure that the ceasefire is fully upheld.

Securing the Russian-Ukrainian border remains vital to emerging from the crisis. Convoys coming from Ukraine, the European Union and, of course, Russia must all be deployed in accordance with Ukrainian law.

Our policy is based on firmness and openness to dialogue. This holds in New York as elsewhere. Our resolve is unshakable alongside our European and American partners.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to extend our thanks to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his comprehensive briefing.

Jordan expresses its concern vis-à-vis the accelerating deterioration of the situation in Ukraine. The crisis has reached dangerous proportions, and the Security Council and the international community must therefore work harder than ever before to resolve the crisis. More than 4,700 people have died so far and more than 1 million have been displaced to other regions within Ukraine and neighbouring countries as a result of the conflict in the east and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation there, especially in basic economic and health services. This is in addition to the flagrant and systemic violations of human rights being committed. We do not need to reiterate them at every meeting, but to affirm that they must come to an end.

That is why we call on all parties to show self-restraint and to immediately stop using force so as to salvage the peace process through a return to peaceful negotiations in order to avert any further escalation, which would only lead to more violence among the parties to the conflict.

We reiterate that there is a need to stop the escalating use of provocative language among the parties so as to give reason and dialogue a chance. Jordan reiterates its belief that it is important to respect the borders of Ukraine as well as its sovereignty and territorial integrity, not to interfere in its internal affairs, to restore security and calm to the border areas, and to stem the flow of foreign fighters and weapons to the separatists.

Instability in Ukraine will be bad not only for Ukraine but also for all the countries of the region and beyond, and the negative political and economic impact will affect the whole region. That is why we feel that we must take practical steps to comprehensively implement the Minsk accord for peace both in letter and in spirit. That is the political framework that was agreed by all parties with a view to achieving a comprehensive peace.

We also call on the Ukrainian Government to continue with its reform programmes, especially in the public and justice sectors, and to see that justice is done by holding accountable those who have committed crimes, including those who have used explosive weapons, and bringing them to justice, as well as completing e the trials that were begun for some of them.

We affirm the need to take every possible measure to protect civilians, provide basic services for citizens and implement the human rights strategy that was charted out for the next five years.

Finally, Jordan values and supports all efforts to bring about peace and to restore stability and security to Ukraine, including the efforts made by European leaders and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its observers, as well as the efforts of Kazakhstan to host a Quartet summit at the end of this month. Jordan looks forward to that summit and to the urgent meeting of the Minsk Contact Group. We hope that the two meetings will lead to a positive outcome and that a solution will be reached that is satisfactory to all parties.

We also call on the parties to show a genuine commitment to use this opportunity to work to pacify the situation in Ukraine and to bring about lasting peace.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I welcome the briefing today by Under-Secretary-General Feltman following his recent visit to Ukraine. The worrying surge in violence over the past week underlines the grave threat that the situation in eastern Ukraine continues to pose to international peace and security.

We were all shocked at the deaths of at least 12 civilians in Volnovakha earlier this month and by reports of hospitals being shelled in Donetsk. We have seen yet more reports of Russian personnel and equipment crossing the Ukrainian border. Among this, we have heard the usual pattern of Russian denials and misinformation.

It is clear, just as it was when we last met, in November (see S/PV.7311), that Russia's actions continue to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, violating international norms and flouting the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The humanitarian impact of these actions is also clear. Over 1 million people have been displaced from their homes. As winter deepens, the situation will only get worse, with the elderly, the young and the infirm all increasingly vulnerable. The separatists must allow Ukrainian humanitarian convoys to enter the regions they control, and Russia must stop using its unilateral humanitarian convoys as cover to supply those separatists with arms.

The human rights situation gives equal cause for concern, with human rights violations reported in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and a total breakdown in law and order in areas under separatist control.

Against this deteriorating context, it should dismay us all that repeated calls for a ceasefire and for respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity have not been heeded. All sides must engage in constructive dialogue and bring about an end to violence in eastern Ukraine. Russia must take steps to withdraw its equipment and troops from Ukraine, cease its support for the separatists and effectively control its borders.

Despite persistent claims to the contrary, the evidence of Russia's support is beyond denial. Two days ago, two companies of Russian troops, including up to 30 armoured personnel carriers and a dozen tanks, were seen crossing the border into Ukraine. Daily we see Russian soldiers operating alongside the separatists. We see separatists brandishing the PKP, Russia's newest machine gun. We have also seen Russian-supplied T-72 BM tanks in the streets of Luhansk and Donetsk. Neither the PKP nor the T-72 BM is used by the Ukrainian armed forces.

The consequences of the situation in the Donbas continue to hurt both the people and the economies of Ukraine and Russia. But there is a political way out: through implementation of the agreements that were reached in Minsk in September. However, despite a number of diplomatic initiatives, including today's Normandy-format meeting, more than 1,000 people have been killed since those commitments were made in September, and separatists have taken control of a substantial additional area of Ukrainian territory since the September agreements.

Indeed, any analysis of the implementation of the Minsk agreements lays bare the manifest failure of Russia and the separatists to implement 10 out of the 12 commitments made on that occasion. In particular, Russia's refusal to implement two key provisions continue to undermine the prospects for peace in Ukraine.

First, at Minsk, all sides agreed to secure continuous monitoring on the Ukraine/Russian border and verification by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) of the creation of a security zone in the border regions of Ukraine and Russia. Despite the best efforts of the OSCE, whose work has been exemplary despite the challenges presented, only two checkpoints are currently monitored on the Russian side, leaving hundreds of kilometres free for the flow of weapons and personnel into Ukraine. If it is serious about Minsk, Russia must stop blocking the expansion of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

Secondly, at Minsk, all sides agreed "to remove illegal armed formations, military equipment, fighters and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine". Yet hundreds of Russian troops still remain on the territory of Ukraine, as do thousands of so-called volunteers, in flagrant violation of the protocol. The withdrawal of those forces is fundamental to the Minsk agreement and the only way to secure the future territorial integrity of Ukraine.

It is important that the Council continue to pay the closest attention to the situation in Ukraine and insist on further progress towards the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Russia has chosen not to uphold its commitments and pursue this path to restoring stability.

And Ukraine, sadly, is not the only case. Russia has made an agreement with a breakaway Georgian province of Abkhazia and is in the process of doing the same with another Georgian region, South Ossetia. This demonstrates a pattern of Russian interference in the domestic affairs of its neighbours and a blatant disregard for their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We call on Russia to exert its influence over separatists, cease the destabilizing activities and work in good faith to find a political solution. The Minsk agreements provide the framework for that solution. They must be implemented in full and without delay.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

The current situation in eastern Ukraine remains turbulent, with an increase in armed clashes and acts of violence resulting in human casualties and the destruction of property. China is deeply worried and concerned about the situation. The top priorities now are to effectively and comprehensively implement the Minsk agreements by all parties concerned, to stay calm and exercise restraint, to prevent further escalation of the conflict and confrontation and to achieve as soon as possible a ceasefire and cessation of violence in eastern Ukraine.

China believes that a political solution is the only way to settle the Ukrainian issue. The crisis in Ukraine is rooted in complex historical facts and contemporary causes. A fundamental solution of the Ukrainian issue lies in fully taking into account the legitimate rights and aspirations of all regions and ethnic groups of Ukraine, while addressing the reasonable concerns of all the parties involved so that their interests can be balanced.

China welcomes and supports the recent positive efforts of the relevant parties to push for a political solution to the Ukrainian issue and hopes that they will join hands, fully take into account the legitimate interests and reasonable concerns of each side and, through such mediation mechanisms as the Normandy and Minsk formats, and find a comprehensive, balanced and lasting political settlement as soon as possible in order to achieve peace, security, stability and development in Ukraine, as well as in the region as a whole.

It is China's long-standing position to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. We support all actions conducive to the holding of dialogues and consultations in search of a political solution to the Ukrainian crisis. We will maintain our just and objective position by playing a positive and constructive role in finding a political solution to the Ukrainian issue.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this informative meeting of the Security Council on Ukraine. We also welcome Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and thank him for his briefing on the current situation in Ukraine.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. We advocate a political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis to be brought about constructively in accordance with the norms and principles of international law.

We are firmly convinced of the need to put an end to the hostilities in south-eastern Ukraine as soon as possible. We reject the acts of violence and ethnic and political persecution and the acts of terrorism regardless of who commits them.

Direct negotiation is the most appropriate means for achieving that goal, and there should be no interference in matters under the domestic jurisdiction of States, be they military, political or economic.

Venezuela stresses that the mediation of regional organizations is the path to a negotiated settlement of the conflict. In that regard we support the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Germany and France aimed at promoting dialogue among Ukraine, Russia and the representatives of the Donbas region. We hope that the recent political meetings will help to bring about a ceasefire that will lead to lasting peace in strict compliance with the Minsk agreements.

Venezuela believes that the parties should act with moderation in order to avoid the dialogue being affected by unilateral actions that could jeopardize the peace process. In that regard, our country rejects the application of unilateral coercive sanctions, which are contrary to international law and counterproductive to the desire for peace and stability in the region, as they erode the necessary climate of trust between the parties.

We also believe that any incident on the ground should be investigated in an independent manner, with evidence being provided that supports its conclusions.

We must avoid a military escalation and the spread of the conflict. All efforts should be made to address the historical and root causes of the crisis in order to achieve a strong and lasting peace that includes all parties involved.

We call upon the parties to strictly observe the commitments concerning the protection of civilians in the areas affected by violence, including the need to ensure access to humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons, refugees and others living in the areas affected by the conflict.

Finally, we call on all parties to redouble their efforts in the search for a just and lasting political solution, which is in everyone's interest and in the interest of the entire region.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. My delegation extends its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his in-depth briefing.

Malaysia shares the grave concern expressed by Under-Secretary-General Feltman and other Council members on the deteriorating situation on the ground in the east of Ukraine. As expressed by the Secretary-General on 18 January, the severe escalation in fighting, especially at the Donetsk airport, has threatened to unravel the September 2014 ceasefire. With a view to immediately de-escalating the situation, Malaysia calls on the conflicting parties to cease fighting and adhere to their commitments to implementing the Minsk protocol and memorandum in their entirety. A military solution would not be sustainable and would not benefit anyone.

The Ukraine crisis has claimed far too many casualties. Close to 5,000 people have been killed, while over 1 million have been displaced. Malaysia is deeply saddened by the recent tragic shelling of a bus transporting civilians on 13 January in the Donetsk region, which caused the death of 12 and injured many more, among them women and children. Malaysia calls for an independent investigation into the incident to hold the perpetrators accountable. That latest incident is yet another instance of senseless killing as the escalating conflict in eastern Ukraine claims more and more innocent victims.

After the downing of MH-17, which killed 298 civilians and shocked the world last summer, Malaysia hoped that the tragic incident would push the conflicting parties to de-escalate the situation, cease fighting and engage in a dialogue to reach a political solution to the conflict. Instead the conflict has been prolonged and grown more intense since then, claiming more and more casualties, and causing a humanitarian crisis.

It is our conviction that adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is of paramount importance in maintaining international peace and security. In particular, we affirm our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs, as espoused in the Charter. In this regard, Malaysia condemns any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, which has brought about the crisis, and views such threats as a violation of the United Nations Charter.

Malaysia calls for constructive engagement on all sides and urges the conflicting parties to continue to explore all possible avenues to find a peaceful solution. Malaysia supports every peaceful effort, including international diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the situation in Ukraine. We call on all parties to respect the rule of law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, to act responsibly and to aim towards finding a peaceful settlement. Malaysia stands ready to play a constructive role towards de-escalating the crisis and resuming talks to restore Ukraine's stability and territorial integrity. We hope that both sides will adopt a moderate approach and find a mutually acceptable solution. The interest, welfare and security of the people of Ukraine must be given top priority by all parties.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing. Nigeria is deeply concerned that despite the various efforts aimed at resolving the crisis in Ukraine, the situation on the ground has not changed. The fighting between Government forces and separatist rebels continues unabated and has indeed intensified.

In our pronouncements on the crisis in Ukraine, we have consistently called for a political solution that adequately addresses the concerns of the separatists while preserving and fully respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. That remains our position. We urge the parties to work in

good faith towards overcoming the current stalemate in the implementation of the Minsk agreement, which Nigeria sees as providing a credible and workable framework for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): The recent escalation of violence in Ukraine is a very serious threat to what were at best, even before that escalation, fragile steps towards a peace. The Under-Secretary-General's report that there is a mounting alarm at the situation, particularly the humanitarian situation, is one with which we can only agree. New Zealand therefore continues to be deeply concerned about this conflict, and particularly its implications for core principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as territorial integrity and the prohibition of the threat or the use of force. The conflict has so far led to an unacceptable loss of life, especially that of civilians. More than 1 million people have been displaced from their homes, and they now face a very harsh winter.

Examples of the impact of this tragedy on innocent citizens abound. The destruction within the past 24 hours of a major bridge into Luhansk, while no doubt a military objective, also impedes desperately needed humanitarian relief, and that is totally unacceptable. We urge therefore close cooperation among all relevant parties, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations.

It is a particular concern that the conflict continues despite the clear and unequivocal commitments recorded in the Minsk protocol and memorandum. We call on all parties to fully implement their commitments under those agreements, including an immediate and full cessation of all hostilities, with a clear definition of the line of contact between the parties. We also call for the continued release of detainees. These conditions must come into effect immediately to allow the resumption of productive diplomatic discussions, especially the planned summit-level consultations. And those consultations are now of great urgency. It should be clear to all of us that this crisis cannot be resolved by the use of force. A sustainable political solution must be found.

We continue to read with alarm reports indicating the involvement of Russian troops and materiel in the conflict, and urge both Russia and the pro-Russian separatists to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We also call on Russia to use its influence, as its representative just told us it has done before, to ensure that pro-Russian separatists fully respect the ceasefire.

We welcome the mediating role of the OSCE, and we encourage it to continue its efforts to end the fighting. However, we also believe that this Security Council must live up to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. It has already been pointed out that in 2014, the Council met no fewer than 27 times to discuss the situation in Ukraine; but so far, we have seen very little impact from all of that high level attention.

And so it is that at this the 28th meeting New Zealand affirms that the Council is properly seized of the matter and calls for a more purposeful Council engagement with a real focus on supporting efforts to negotiate a resolution to the conflict. Only then will we see tangible outcomes for those most affected — the people of eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): We welcome the convening of this meeting this afternoon, and thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for the very in-depth briefing that he provided to the Council.

The crisis in Ukraine has serious consequences for the political, economic and social stability of its people, and we agree that all peaceful means must be found to resolve it. The Minsk agreement signed in September is an important basis for a settlement as long as all the parties concerned can demonstrate the political will to make it a reality, in spirit as well as in letter. We know that a round of negotiations was scheduled for this afternoon in Berlin between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany. It is our conviction that it will be possible to reach a negotiated solution if the parties have the political will. That would certainly be a welcome development for the Council at the beginning of a new year and with the restart of our deliberations on this crisis.

The humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine is deplorable, and it is unacceptable that so many people continue to be killed, maimed and deprived of food, clean water, housing and other essentials of human life, especially given the extremely cold winter they are living through.

Finally, Angola appeals to all the parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict to use their intelligence to find possible solutions to safeguarding international peace and security in this conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Chile.

We thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing.

I would first like to say how deeply concerned we are about the new escalation of the crisis in eastern and southern Ukraine, particularly around the Donetsk airport. We deplore the worsening security situation, which has had serious consequences for the civilian population, who continue to suffer violations and abuses of human rights inflicted by all sides.

We urge the parties to comply fully with the ceasefire, as monitored and verified by the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, pursuant to the provisions of the Minsk accords. We are confident in the full ability of all the parties to implement the agreement, which is an inclusive political instrument designed to achieve peace and tranquillity for the entire population of eastern Ukraine. We urge all the parties to pursue the high-level dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and to exercise restraint and refrain from unilateral actions that could exacerbate tensions. We hope that the Minsk contact group can deliver positive results in the coming weeks.

Until a permanent peaceful solution is found, humanitarian assistance should be provided without delay and in accordance with humanitarian principles. The efforts of the international community must be channeled through the host Government, which has primary responsibility for aiding and protecting its people.

We emphasize the continued importance of strengthening the rule of law and the obligation to respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 68/262 and international law, as well as respecting the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of another State.

Lastly, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's continued efforts to end the situation that Ukraine is enduring, and we hope that the various independent international mechanisms will continue to contribute to resolving this crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your effective leadership of the Council for the month of January. Since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor this year, I would also like to congratulate the new members — Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela — on their election to the Council. I am grateful to you, Sir, for convening this meeting, and would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

It has been almost a year since the events of February and March 2014, when the Russian Federation manipulated two of the basic principles of the United Nations — the right to self-determination and the right to protection — in order to create a fake legal pretext for invading Ukraine. As a result, it occupied and then annexed part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Sooner or later the Russian Federation will be brought to justice for that particular crime of aggression against Ukraine.

As of today, the Russian Federation is continuing its military aggression in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine by sending military units into our territory, delivering heavy weapons to the local terrorist groups, training, equipping and financing mercenaries and waging an information war. That aggression is aimed at forcing my Government to change its constitutional and territorial order, thereby undermining the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of Ukraine.

Every day of the past year has been traumatic for the Ukrainian people. On 8 June, militants from the so-called Donetsk People's Republic tortured and killed eight priests and parishioners of the Protestant church in the Ukrainian city of Slovyansk. On 17 July, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was brought down from a zone controlled by the terrorists. Last week, on 13 January, terrorists fired on a passenger bus near the Ukrainian town of Volnovakha, killing 13 and wounding 15 Ukrainian civilians. The ongoing investigation of that tragic terrorist attack on civilians near Volnovakha, and the relevant conclusions of the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, prove that the shelling was carried out from the north-north-eastern areas currently occupied by illegal armed groups. I would like to take this opportunity to express Ukraine's

appreciation for the Council's strong condemnation of that terrorist act. My country is waging a war against terrorism. It is fighting on the front lines for such universal values as freedom, sovereignty and democracy.

In the wake of the Minsk agreements of 5 and 19 September 2014, the President of Ukraine declared a ceasefire and began to implement all points, without exception, of the agreement signed by the representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the rebels. Despite the fact that they are signatories to the agreements, the Russian side and Russian-backed terrorists have persistently and brutally violated the Minsk provisions. With Russia's backing, and in breach of the Minsk arrangements, the illegal armed groups have occupied more than 550 square kilometres since September. As a result of the terrorists' lack of compliance with the ceasefire regime, during this period Ukraine has lost 237 military troops and at least 148 civilians. In contravention of the ceasefire regime, the shelling of Ukrainian positions has increased. In particular, in the past 10 days alone the total shelling has surpassed the numbers for the whole of the previous month.

Since signing the Minsk agreements in September, the Russian side has significantly increased its military presence in Donbas and has filled the region with highly sophisticated heavy weapons. The terrorists recently announced that they have created their own air force. We presume that is a manoeuvre to cover up the future deployment and use of Russian military aircraft in action. The build-up of Russian troops at the Ukrainian border has also increased and has now reached 50,000.

With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to say a few words in Russian.

(*spoke in Russian*)

What is a battalion of the 76th Airborne Division from Pskov doing in the residential areas of Heorhiivka and Komachova? What is a battalion doing in the residential areas of Pobeda and Hryhorivka?

(*spoke in English*)

A battalion is around 400 or 500 men.

(*spoke in Russian*)

What is a separate air-assault brigade from Ulyanovsk doing in the area of Starobeshevo? There is a battalion from the 76th Motorized Brigade from Maikop and the 49th Brigade from Stavropol. What are armed units from Volgograd, Kaliningrad, Kostroma, Shilovo, Yurga, Aleysk, Gusinoozyorsk, Pecheneg, Sputnik, Novorossiysk, Tula, Naro-Fominsk and elsewhere in Ukraine? These amount to more than 8,000 troops. Are they on vacation, as we have heard many times in clarification from the Russian side? Do their families know where they are?

(*spoke in English*)

Russia officially denies sending troops, but the Russian families of troops killed tell a different story. What is this if not aggression? We again draw the Council's attention to the fact that the illegal armed groups intensified their attacks and shelling after receiving reinforcements from the territory of the Russian Federation, including in the form of Russia's so-called humanitarian convoys. We denounce the provocative statements made by Russian officials, who have tried to shift responsibility for violations onto Ukraine, including those which the Russian delegation has made to the Security Council today. I do not have any intention of continually commenting on or of repeating the disinformation concerning the implementation of the Minsk agreements by my Government or the measures the Government of Ukraine has taken to meet the needs of the Ukrainian citizens in Donbas. Recently, we helped disseminate information on that issue to all members of the Security Council.

Even despite the intensification of foreign aggression, Ukraine remains fully committed to a peaceful settlement of the crisis, which should be based on the Minsk agreements and on full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political unity of Ukraine. We have twice initiated a ceasefire and unilaterally adhered to it. On 13 November 2014, representatives of Ukraine and Russia signed a working document envisaging a clear schedule for the implementation of the provisions of the Minsk agreements, in particular concerning assurances of the bilateral ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and return to the touch-line. The Russian side recalled its signature under that document.

On 18 January, Ukraine once again reiterated its appeal to the Russian Federation and suggested that Russia should sign the timetable for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, as worded on 13 November 2014, and to ensure that the ceasefire would start on 19 January. We believe that it will allow us to immediately resume the ceasefire and to protect civilians from the attacks carried out by the militants in the region in

the course of the past four months. The beginning of the strict implementation of the document will create appropriate conditions for holding consultations of the trilateral contact group in the near future, and later the summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in Astana. We demand that the plan be finally implemented.

As was stated by the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, despite the escalation of pressure and the activation of terrorists, Ukraine is ready to sign the ceasefire agreement, given our full adherence to the Minsk agreements. Ukraine is striving for peace. We still expect the same commitment to the Minsk agreements on the part of the Russian side. After all, it is the President of the Russian Federation who has repeatedly confirmed his adherence to the implementation of the Minsk agreements in their full scope and without exception. That position was affirmed, inter alia, at the multilateral summit in Milan.

We sincerely thank all our partners for their solidarity with us at this crucial time for Ukraine, Europe, the Security Council and the world. We thank those who have expressed strong support today for the release of the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savachenko, who is illegally detained in Russia.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make an additional statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before the beginning of today's meeting, we were supposed to hold closed consultations to consider whether or not the Security Council could make a contribution to settling the Ukrainian crisis. However, as colleagues have complained to us, the delegation of the United States showed its hand, and we know why. It was to create yet another propagandist controversy. The representative of the United States went beyond the Ukrainian topic and made a number of inappropriate insinuations regarding Russia's policies. That is why we need to talk about the United States policy.

Throughout the Ukrainian crisis, the United States has played a destructive and — if we are to speak frankly — a provocative role. After every visit of high-ranking United States officials to Ukraine, the Kyiv Government has stepped up the confrontational nature of its activities, and the current military escalation horrifically coincides with the visit to Kyiv of the commander of the American forces in Europe. It is surprising that wherever Washington, D.C., turns its gaze — be it Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, everywhere — we see destabilization, crises and bloodshed. Perhaps the United States believes that Europe does not have enough problems and that the eastern part of the continent needs a long, drawn-out crisis. It would seem that some European capitals — though not yet all, as demonstrated by today's discussion — have begun to understand where things are going.

Ms. Power and other colleagues talked about certain conflicts that occurred as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union, and for some reason blamed Russia for them. I recall that the conflict in Transnistria could have been settled back in 2005 if Washington, D.C., had not intervened at the last moment, convincing Chisinău not to sign the prepared agreement. Abkhazia, in South Ossetia, would not have declared its independence if in 2001 Washington, D.C., had not provoked an eruption of the already unbalanced regime of Saakashvili.

I now come back to the subject of Ukraine. During today's discussion, we have heard a number of specific grievances against Russia. I would recommend that colleagues carefully study the text of the major press conference held in Moscow today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of our country, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, and that they reread my statement.

In regard to the statement made by the Ukrainian representative, I have only one thing to say. In all our many discussions in the Security Council, the Ukrainian delegation has never uttered a respectful word and has actually been insulting when referring to the south-eastern part of his country. He uses the terms "bandits" and "terrorists". Sometimes the Ukrainian political elite calls them "inhuman" or "insects". I have yet to hear my Ukrainian colleagues raise the subject of inclusive political dialogue. While the Kyiv Government does not seem ready to take this up, it is now time to do so with political courage and to understand that there is no other way to keep Ukraine whole.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I certainly understand the desire of the representative of the Russian Federation to speak about other conflicts and other crises, rather than the situation and their tactics of continuing to support the separatists who are

wreaking havoc in Ukraine. It seems that while Russia continues the same tactics of supporting the separatists in Ukraine, it also continues its same tactics in the Council — distracting and demonstrating a repeated preference for fantasy over fact.

So let us be clear. It has been claimed that the Russian Federation is striving for implementation of the Minsk agreements. In fact, Russia and the separatists it supports have taken practically no steps to implement the September Minsk agreements. For example, attacks are continuing past the agreed ceasefire line. Weapons, heavy artillery and military personnel continue to flow across the border from Russia to the separatists. The border remains unsecured and hostages are still being held, including on Russian territory.

Meanwhile, Ukraine has taken great strides to implement the provisions of the 5 September Minsk protocol, including twice declaring a unilateral ceasefire as separatists continued to fire. It has been claimed that Ukraine is building up its military presence and resorting to militarization. In fact, Ukraine is attempting to hold the ceasefire line agreed to on 19 September. The fact that the Russian-backed separatists have decided to ignore the line and try to take additional territory does not provide a basis to renegotiate that line. The line should not be renegotiated because the separatists have gained additional territory through repeated ceasefire violations since September.

It has been claimed that the Donetsk airport, under the Minsk agreements, should be under the control of the Russian-backed separatists. In fact, according to the 19 September Minsk agreement, the line of contact should go straight through the Donetsk airport and the agreement stipulated that all forces would draw back at least 15 kilometers on both sides of the ceasefire line. The airport would have remained neutral territory had the Minsk agreements been properly implemented. The 19 September agreement laid out specific coordinates. There should be no confusion that cannot be resolved with a GPS.

The representative of the Russian Federation claims that Ukraine will not respond to President Putin's latest proposal. In fact, there is no need to renegotiate a new peace plan or a new ceasefire line. The September Minsk agreements, which provide for a cessation of fighting, permanent international monitoring of the border, the removal of all Russian equipment and personnel from the Ukrainian territory, the release of all hostages, and increased autonomy for the region within Ukrainian law, remain the best path to de-escalating the conflict.

What the Russians seem to be doing is not to implement Minsk, but to redraft the line of control articulated in it. Russia and the separatists it supports should fulfil the commitments they made in September, rather than attempt to reopen negotiations while increasing the level of violence and attacks to change the facts on the ground. We need more facts, less fantasy. We need more implementation of Minsk, not more distractions from it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I understand that Ms. Power decided that she had not been eloquent enough in setting out the American position, and that her Deputy needed to repeat some portions of her statement. I regret that Ambassador Power has decided not to continue this principled discussion with us on matters of international policy.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I apologise for taking the floor again, but my country has been mentioned several times in the past few minutes. I will make a few comments on the so-called national dialogue on decentralization in Ukraine and the humanitarian situation.

As my colleague said, yesterday morning we sent to all members of the Security Council — including the Russian Federation — information on the social and humanitarian situation in Donbas and the measures taken by the Government of Ukraine to meet the needs of the Ukrainian citizens in Donbas. Everything is contained in that paper, so I do not know why the Russian colleague has told the mistruth that we are not commenting on Ukraine's policy of inclusiveness. It is up to those present to decide.

On mobilization, yes, we are in the process of reforming our army, which was fully destroyed in recent years. Why are we doing that? Because of the facts expressed today — the enlargement of the Russian military presence in in Donbas, Ukraine, with thousands of Russian nationals and sophisticated weaponry.

We have a right to defend ourselves. That is why we are doing so, ourselves. Based on the United Nations principle of collective self-defence, we have called on many countries and organizations for assistance. It has not been easy to get a response; we have not received any weaponry equal to the Russians'. That is why we are doing what we are doing to defend ourselves. It is our right.

As to the issue of Ukrainian citizens, the paper I mentioned is addressed to the Ukrainian citizens in Donbas who are under the terrorist threat. Who are we calling terrorists? Those who killed the passengers of Flight MH-17, those who killed priests and those who killed civilians are terrorists and they would be considered terrorists anywhere, whatever their nationality or the threat they represent. We are participating in the common fight against terrorism. They are terrorists and they are called by that name because their actions identify them as terrorists.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.